

POP-ING THE STRINGS: A FRESH SOUND FROM A CLASSICAL SOURCE

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ABSTRACT

POP-ing the Strings; Fresh Sound from a Classical Source

Internationally trained artist Nicole Marques breaks free from the conventions of Classical Violin with her refreshing POP Strings compositions.

As an educator, Nicole Marques understands the importance of student engagement and motivation in music education. Her innovative string orchestra & ensemble compositions are arranged for small and large ensembles and feature backing tracks that make working through the creative process fun!

Nicole teaches Instrumental Music Strings at the Central Peel Secondary School Regional Strings Program in Brampton (Ontario, Canada), with the Peel District School board.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

POP Strings Series Audio Recording Information

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgments.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
List of Figures.....	v
Chapter One: Location of Self.....	1
1.1 The Context and the Limitations.....	1
Chapter Two: Materials and Methods.....	3
2.1 Description of the Student Body.....	3
2.2 Specific Challenges of Differentiated Learners.....	4
2.3 Repertoire Analysis.....	11
POP Strings Series - “Clocca” (Beginner Level).....	13
POP Strings Series - “Pizzicato Suite” (Beginner Level).....	18
POP Strings Series - “Time After Time” (Beginner Level).....	28
POP Strings Series - “Last Night’s Dance” (Intermediate Level).....	35
POP Strings Series - “Quando o Sol e a Lua” (Intermediate level).....	47
POP Strings Series - “For Always” (Advanced Level).....	57
POP Strings Series - “Temporal Senses” (Advanced Level).....	64
Chapter Three: In Conclusion.....	69
Bibliography.....	70
Appendix A: High School Music Program Research.....	72

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Yamaha Sponsors Strings X-Travaganza, 2013.....	8
Figure 2: Grade 6 to 9 string players playing with Devah.....	9
Figure 3: Students using Yamaha electrics.....	9
Figure 4: String instrument fingering diagram.....	27
Figure 5: Metronome vs. Play along individual practice.....	55
Figure 6: Metronome vs. Play along group practice.....	55

CHAPTER ONE: LOCATION OF SELF

1.1 The Context and the Limitations

Having grown up playing the violin in a family surrounded by non-classical music lovers, listening to classical music was not a priority. The household listened to the common popular radio music at the time: 80s Rock. Classical conservatory private lessons and western-classical art music small ensembles were my only exposure to classical music. Having started playing the violin at the age of 5, I began to construct barriers between instrumental western-classical violin music and “other” music. The violin was never represented in music that I listened to at home; not understanding why, I just accepted it as fact. As I grew into my teenage years, I began to wonder why I had to follow all the classical rules. Why could I not change the bow marking? Why did I have to play the fingering indicated? I felt frustrated by the constraints forced upon me. Practicing was not “fun” anymore. When I would get together with my cousins that played piano, saxophone and guitar, I never understood how or what to play in the absence of sheet music. I was very much confined to playing what the page said, and I didn’t know what was behind the notes.

I also studied music theory, harmony, and music history. I started in Portugal and then continued studying music in Canada. I read and memorized all the information for the tests, passed them and got first class honours. However, I was not able to apply the information in a real-life situation. Maybe this was due to my young age, maybe due to the lack of connections, applications, and inquiry into the way that I had been taught.

I went on to study music performance in university, and taught private violin and piano lessons part-time. I started feeling some interest for the music education stream. While at York University I stumbled upon Matt Brubeck. I signed up for his Jazz Strings class and started playing jazz pieces on the violin. He challenged me as an instrumentalist and opened up a world of possibilities on the violin that I had never been previously known. Playing the violin was once again fun. I felt I could begin to express myself through my instrument.

As I started feeling more interest in the music education stream, I taught music in Portugal for a year to verify my choice. I worked at a private school that was renowned for their facilities; however, I quickly noticed the absence of musical instruments. After discussing my ideas with the administration, I started an after-school violin club, which in only a few months enrolled 25 string players ranging from grades 1 through 6. The string club was extremely important for my growth as an educator. I learned about the interests of elementary school students, the lack of resources, and the limitations that constrain music education. I also worked with students ranging from preschoolers to grade 10, organizing two concerts a year for parents and family. I learned about how choice is extremely important to teenagers, the students enjoyed the process of music selection, it was their chance to sing and dance to pieces they liked.

When I moved back to Toronto and enrolled in a Bachelor of Music Education degree program, I learned about the development of children, teenagers and young adults, and the latest pedagogical practices. I started teaching at a secondary school, implementing a new high school Regional Strings program, and this brought me new challenges, that I discuss in the next sections.

CHAPTER TWO: MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Description of the Student Body

I am currently a secondary school educator with the Peel District School board at Central Peel Secondary School. I teach a Regional Strings program—I was fortunate to have initiated the strings program at the school. My students reflect the diversity of Brampton’s population. I have students from almost all of the continents, and they all come with their own prior experiences in music. The strings program is an optional four year program, where students play a stringed instrument throughout school. The students receive two credits each semester, and eight credits at the end of the four year program. They are grouped by playing ability regardless of their age. The current classes are: beginning strings, intermediate strings, and advanced strings with a mix of students between grades 9 and 10 with ages 14 to 16. As the program grows, it will include grades 9 through 12 (ages 14 to 18).

I was fortunate to start teaching in a new program where I had the freedom to develop the structure of the program. Our Regional Strings program works alongside the Advanced Placement (AP) program in the school. The AP program is an academically enriched program, where students learn university level material while still in high-school. At the end of the four-year program they may take an AP exam; if successful, many universities will accept this as a university level credit. Ninety percent of the Regional Strings students are also AP students. Many of the students are in Regional Strings program because they know the benefits of music on cognitive functions—they are not necessarily pursuing a career in music. Others are enrolled to enhance creative thinking and presentation skills. Some are in the program because they love

music and want it to be a part of their high school experience. There are also students that want to pursue a career in music. Our program needs to appeal to all of these interests. Throughout this thesis, each section begins with a quotation. These include questions or observations from me or my students. In education you need to “ask the right questions if you’re going to find the right answers” (Vanessa Redgrave).

2.2 Specific Challenges of Differentiated Learners

“I want to be a doctor, she wants to be an accountant, he wants to be a speech pathologist, she wants to be a lawyer - and that’s why we study music!”¹

The Regional Strings Program is a four year program that encompasses eight credits throughout high school. The students have a seventy-five minute string class every day throughout four years. The program accepts string students from grades 9 through 12 at the beginner level, with no previous experience; at the intermediate level for students with prior strings experience, and at the advanced level for advanced players (level 5 Royal Conservatory of Music and up). I teach three classes a day. The program is now in its second year with grades 9 and 10 contributing a total of 47 students. The classes are all split (multi-grade) classes. The beginner class has grades 9 and 10, the intermediate strings class has grades 9 and 10, and the advanced strings class has grades 9 and 10. When the program reaches its fourth year, there will be four courses in each class: beginning strings will have grades 9 and 10 students, intermediate

¹ Grade 9 String Student. "High School Music Program Research, Regional Strings Classroom Interviews." Personal interview by author. 2014.

strings will have grades 9, 10, 11 and 12 students, and the advanced strings class will have grades 9, 10, 11 and 12 students. Working with multi-grade classes is extremely difficult. In single classes it is hard enough appealing to all learners, in split classes with ages ranging from thirteen to eighteen year olds it is difficult to appeal to all learner's needs, likes, wishes, and wants. Furthermore, each grade has different curriculum requirements. Grade 9, 10, 11, and 12 music literacy is all different and unique. Our program prepares students for the option of taking an Advanced Placement Music Theory Exam while still in grade 12 high school. If successful, students earn an university credit. However, this means that while still in high school our students must learn university level musicianship. It is extremely difficult to prepare students with no prior musical knowledge in grade 9 to achieve university level musicianship by grade 12, in four years with split classes. I accomplished this, however, through a flipped classroom method for music theory. Every week, the students watch a five to ten minute video at home with a different theory lesson for each grade. The students come back to class and work on activities that are different for each of the grades. A mentoring system has also proven to be very effective in helping younger students and simultaneously provides leadership opportunities for older students. The students have frequent literacy quizzes, on a 5-inch \times 7-inch paper with no more than five questions. If they can apply the concept five times, then they know how to apply it more times—there is no educational benefit for making longer formative assessments. These assessments take a maximum of five to ten minutes of class time. At the end of each semester the students have a one hour music literacy (music theory and ear training) exam. This exam is ten percent of their final grade. They are not given the option of re-writing. This prepares them for the rigour of the Advanced Placement exam, if they choose to take it in grade 12. By the time

they take their final semester exam, with all the assessment opportunities throughout the semester, all students have been successful. At this point, with this system we have a zero percent failure rate.

“I didn’t understand the assessment then, but I get it now; why should I be punished for taking longer to understand?”²

Another current practice in our program with music literacy is allowing students to re-do assessments as many times as it takes them to reach a 70% on that assessment. After they reach a 70% (provincial standard) they have one more try to improve their mark, if they wish to do so. Not all students understand or learn things the first time, and the goal for assessment is to “improve student learning”, even though it requires the educator to mark 3 or 4 times more work. I have seen the difference first-hand it makes in student learning and understanding.

As an educator in Ontario, I must follow the Ontario Curriculum documents which have various *strands* for music. The overall expectations are the same for grades 9 and 10 and almost identical in grades 11 and 12, with only a few alterations. Here are the overall expectations for grades 9 and 10 in Ontario:

A. Creating and Performing

A1. The Creative Process: apply the stages of the creative process when performing notated and/or improvised music and composing and/or arranging music.

² Grade 9 Student. "High School Music Program Research, Regional Strings Classroom Interviews." Personal interview by author. 2014.

A2. The Elements of Music: apply elements of music when performing notated and improvised music and composing and/or arranging music

A3. Techniques and Technologies: use a variety of techniques and technological tools when performing music and composing and/or arranging music.

B. Reflecting, Responding, and Analysing

B1. The Critical Analysis Process: use the critical analysis process when responding to, analysing, reflecting on, and interpreting music;

B2. Music and Society: demonstrate an understanding of how traditional, commercial, and art music reflect the society in which they were created and how they have affected communities or cultures;

B3. Skills and personal Growth: demonstrate an understanding of how performing, creating, and critically analysing music has affected their skills and personal development.

B4. Connections Beyond the Classroom: identify and describe various opportunities for continued engagement in music.

C. Foundations

C1. Theory and Terminology: demonstrate an understanding of music theory with respect to concepts of notation and the elements and other components of music, and use appropriate terminology relating to them.

C2. Characteristics and Development of Music: demonstrate an understanding of the history of some musical forms and of characteristics of types of music from around the world.

C3. Conventions and Responsible Practices: demonstrate an understanding of responsible practices and performance conventions relating to music.³

Alongside the music literacy and history components, our students work on composition projects and ear training units. While grade nines are working on ear training with the teacher, the grade tens are working on composition assignments, putting in practice concepts they have learned in music literacy, ear training, and in the performance units. The idea for all these ongoing units is for them all to tie in well together and appeal to all learners. Some students prefer the performance units, some prefer the written theory, and some prefer the ear training.

³ The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 and 10: The Arts. Toronto: Ministry, 2010

That way, if students are learning intervals: they play harmonies in performance, they learn the musicianship behind it in theory, they study ear training and identify them aurally, and in composition they write their own harmonies to melodic lines. My goal is to follow the Ontario Curriculum motto “reach every student”. Since all students learn differently, it is important to experience the units in as many forms as possible. I believe a problem I had growing up was that I was learning about things and not applying them. I wasn’t able to make the connection then between theory and application. Even though I could write the answers to the questions, I didn’t truly understand why I was doing it and it was very difficult finding answers at a later date.

“Why does a band class have a rhythm section and not a string orchestra class?”⁴

Yamaha Canada last year in November 2013, donated over \$8,000 dollars to our regional string program in electric string instruments, an electric quartet station and a public address system.



Figure 1: Yamaha Sponsors Strings X-Travaganza, 2013

⁴ Grade 9 Student. "High School Music Program Research, Regional Strings Classroom Interviews." Personal interview by author. 2014.

I organized an event at the school called Strings X-Travaganza, to bring in a feeder grade 6-8 school that has a string program, and for our students to experience different forms of string playing.



Figure 2: Grade 6 to 9 string players playing with Devah

The Yamaha “Devah” electric string quartet came by our school to perform a concert in our auditorium, work with our students in sectionals on “Viva la Vida” by Coldplay, a piece the students all knew, and then we brought together 140 string players in our cafeteria to play along with the string quartet. The goal for this event was to promote string playing and string instruments in the Peel District School Board. It was a memorable day for our string students and community.



Figure 3: Students using Yamaha electrics.

The Yamaha electric quartet station has allowed me to explore the use of electric string instruments in the high school music classroom. At first my main concern was that the students would not find the acoustic instruments “cool”. I was quickly surprised, that at trying both instruments the students still loved the acoustics. They preferred to play on acoustics due to the weight and bow control. The electrics served as an embellishment and opened up opportunities for more styles of music. One thing I enjoy about the electric string station is the ability to plug in a backing track and for all instrumentalists to play along with it or to control how much of a track you would like to hear. I began exploring with compositions. Using electric instruments now allowed me to work with drums and percussion, louder instruments that generally overpower string players, and therefore are not commonly used in western classical music.

“We are missing two members of our quartet! How do we rehearse?”⁵

After exploring with electric quartet stations and backing tracks, one thing that became a challenge was covering all the parts. With the nature of high school music programs, not all parts are always available. Students are often away on field trips for sport teams or subject areas, they might get sick, and then a quartet is left without one of the parts. The POP string series compositions in this thesis feature backing track accompaniment where the students can choose which parts to hear or mute depending on the requirements of their ensemble. It also facilitates and answers the common student question “how does my part fit in this piece?” It is common for violin II, viola and cello players to struggle listening for their part in the complete ensemble

⁵ Grade 10 String Student. "High School Music Program Research, Regional Strings Classroom Interviews." Personal interview by author. 2014.

recording. With these backing tracks they are able to isolate it and play along with it for practice. The backing track system allows students to listen for their part, and to remove their part from the recording, in that way they are able to see the contributions their part makes towards the final mix and see first-hand how every part is essential.

2.3 Repertoire Analysis

These POP Strings Series compositions are divided into three groups: the Beginning Strings Series for first to second year beginning strings ensembles, Intermediate Series for experienced players at an intermediate level, and the Advanced Series, for experienced string players at an advanced level. I have written string orchestra/quartet pieces for each level. These pieces are aimed at high-school students (ages 13 to 18) and appeal to their learning needs/styles. The learning needs of a high-school student revolve around their social relationships. Teenagers want to fit in, they want to socialize, and their main concern is what peers think of them.

“Fitting in” is about the importance of collaboration and group work. Working together, collaborating towards a common task, are skills that prepare our students for whatever career they may choose in their future. In the POP-Strings Series Beginning Strings compositions, all pieces are written with the melody divided among all instrument sections. Traditionally, violin I carries out the melody, harmonized by violin II, accompanied by violas, cellos and double basses. However, students in sections other than violin I generally struggle with wanting to play the melody and not only accompaniment; as a result, they feel less important. In the POP Strings Series, no one instrument section is important on its own; with this, the students learn that only

through collaboration will the composition sound as intended. Through small or large ensemble practice, the students learn when to follow and when to lead. They work both on playing accompaniment and melody sections, no matter which instrument they play.

Making a mistake in public is scary and frustrating for students in this age group.

Pizzicato compositions help beginner students find the confidence they need to play in public.

Backing tracks provide students with confidence and immediate results. In today's age, students are instantly rewarded by achieving another level in a game, or accomplishing a task. Instant rewards are important—telling teenagers that if they play an exercise with a metronome it will benefit them in the long run is not as effective as instantly rewarding them with pieces that focus on technique they need to develop but that they will also enjoy practicing, by appealing to their common knowledge and learning needs.

"Clocca"

Medieval Latin word for bell (Clock)

Nicole Marques

$\text{♩} = 100$

Violin I
mf
pizz.

Violin II
mf
pizz.

Viola
pizz. *mf*

Violoncello
pizz. *mf*

Double Bass
pizz. *mf*

5

9

13

17

21

Open for Solos

25

On Cue

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29

A musical score for the song 'The Rose Tree'. The score is written for five staves. The first two staves are in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The last three staves are in bass clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The music is in 4/4 time. The melody is played on the first two staves, and the accompaniment is played on the last three staves. The melody consists of a series of eighth and quarter notes, with some rests. The accompaniment consists of a series of eighth and quarter notes, with some rests. The song ends with a final chord on the first staff.

The Regional Strings program at Central Peel Secondary School accepts beginner strings students with no prior experience in music. These students enter grade 9 in September, and are expected to perform by the December music night concert. Some of the challenges a beginning strings educator feels is the challenge of getting a beginner group performance ready in three months and the challenge of finding appropriate repertoire that will not embarrass the students. It is challenging to find appropriate performance pieces for beginning strings ensembles in their first stages of playing that will both challenge and motivate the students. If the students go up on stage and perform a method book exercise of two lines, they do not feel accomplished.

“Clocca” is a piece completely played in *pizzicato* throughout (string articulation technique where the string is plucked rather than bowed). It is a performance piece that works well for the “December concert night”, with only 3 months to prepare. By going up on stage the students are confronting their stage fright, and for many students it is their first time playing an instrument on a stage. For teenagers, social image is extremely important; they value it tremendously, and generally have a big fear of social embarrassment. At the beginning stages of playing a string instrument, it is difficult for students to focus on pitch and rhythm. Removing the bow (*arco*) in this piece, and writing it completely in *pizzicato*, allows students to focus more on musicianship and learning to work together as an ensemble. Developing a good tone takes time, and teenagers often want “fast” results, this *pizzicato* piece is a good way for them to feel accomplished and to work through those first performance jitters.

Having not always been provided with the opportunity to do so, I’ve realized the importance of improvisation. It’s important for students to develop their “own voice”, to express

themselves with their instruments, Pop-Strings Series includes improvisation with that purpose.

The students improvise on the first scale they've learned, D Major.

This piece features some challenges for the lower string instruments, introducing some shifting, and having them carry the melody. The melody is written in a call and response style, carried through all the instrument sections. Along with the current hip-hop backing track accompaniment, counting is facilitated both during rehearsal and performance, by a constant beat in the background.

Pizzicato Suite

I

Open Strings

Nicole Marques

♩ = 100

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass

pizz.

ff

p

5

f

f

f

f

f

II First Fingers

1

First system of music (measures 1-5). The score is written for five staves: two treble clefs, a 12/8 time signature, and two bass clefs. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). Measure 1 is a whole rest for all parts. Measure 2 is a repeat sign. Measure 3 contains a forte (*f*) dynamic marking. Measure 4 contains a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic marking. Measure 5 contains a forte (*f*) dynamic marking. The music features a mix of eighth and quarter notes, with some rests.

6

Second system of music (measures 6-9). The score continues from the first system. Measure 6 contains a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic marking. Measure 7 contains a forte (*f*) dynamic marking. Measure 8 contains a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic marking. Measure 9 contains a forte (*f*) dynamic marking. The music features a mix of eighth and quarter notes, with some rests. The system ends with a double bar line and a key signature change to three sharps (F#, C#, and G#).

III
Upper Strings
on Second Fingers

1

f
p
p
mp
mp

5

9

Musical score for measures 9-12. The score is in 3/8 time with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). It features five staves: two treble clefs, one alto clef (C4), and two bass clefs. Measures 9-12 show a rhythmic pattern of eighth and quarter notes with rests.

13

Musical score for measures 13-16. The score continues with the same five-staff arrangement. Measure 13 starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic. Measures 14-16 include mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamics and "Slap" markings on the bottom bass staff.

17

Musical score for measures 17-20. The score is in 4/4 time with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). It features five staves: two treble clefs, one alto clef, and two bass clefs. The music consists of eighth and quarter notes, rests, and 'x' marks on the bottom staff.

21

Musical score for measures 21-24. The score is in 4/4 time with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). It features five staves: two treble clefs, one alto clef, and two bass clefs. The music consists of eighth and quarter notes, rests, and 'x' marks on the bottom staff. The piece concludes with a double bar line and a 4/4 time signature. The dynamic marking *p* (piano) is present in measures 22, 23, and 24.

IV
All Four

1

First system of music (measures 1-4) in 4/4 time, key of D major (two sharps). The score consists of five staves. The top two staves are treble clef, the middle staff is alto clef, and the bottom two are bass clef. Measures 1 and 2 contain rests for all parts. In measure 3, the first and second staves enter with a forte (*f*) dynamic, playing eighth-note runs. The third staff remains silent. The fourth and fifth staves play a steady eighth-note accompaniment, also marked *f*. In measure 4, the first and second staves continue their runs, while the third staff remains silent. The fourth and fifth staves continue their accompaniment.

5

Second system of music (measures 5-8) in 4/4 time, key of D major. Measures 5 and 6 contain rests for the first and second staves. In measure 5, the third staff enters with a forte (*f*) dynamic, playing a continuous eighth-note pattern. In measure 6, the first and second staves enter with eighth-note runs, while the third staff continues its pattern. Measures 7 and 8 continue this texture: the first and second staves play eighth-note runs, the third staff plays eighth notes, and the fourth and fifth staves provide the eighth-note accompaniment.

9

Musical score for measures 9-12. The score is written for five staves. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The time signature is 4/4. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The first two staves are in treble clef, and the last three are in bass clef. The score is divided into four measures. The first measure contains a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The second measure contains a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The third measure contains a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The fourth measure contains a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The dynamic marking *p* (piano) is present in the fourth measure on the first, second, and third staves.

13

Musical score for measures 13-16. The score is written for five staves. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The time signature is 4/4. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The first two staves are in treble clef, and the last three are in bass clef. The score is divided into four measures. The first measure contains a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The second measure contains a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The third measure contains a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The fourth measure contains a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The dynamic marking *p* (piano) is present in the fourth measure on the first, second, and third staves.

17

f

f

f

f

f

21



Learning to play a string instrument is not an easy task, and for beginning high-school string players, a lot of information is given at the beginning: students learn how to read the notes, which fingers to use, how to hold and use the bow, music terms, and so on— all this in the first few weeks of class. It can be overwhelming multitasking and processing all this information at once, especially for students that have no prior knowledge on other music instruments. *Pizzicato* is generally the first articulation technique taught on string instruments (plucking the string instead of using the bow), it is a great way of getting students to focus on the left hand and to start feeling comfortable with the notes, without having to worry about right hand bow control. *Pizzicato Suite* is written both as an instructional tool, and a “first performance” piece for beginning string ensembles, for that first winter concert! This suite is organized into four movements, each focusing on introducing the use of one left hand finger. The first movement only requires students to know their four open strings. The second movement adds the use of the first finger, the third movement adds the second finger, and movement four adds fingers three and four. The four movements also progressively add rhythmic challenges for the students,

switching time signatures and introducing syncopation. However, these challenges are fully supported by the percussion instruments in the rhythmic accompaniment (audio play along track) and therefore facilitate learning and practice.

As an educator, it has always been a challenge finding *pizzicato* pieces. To give my students in their early weeks of string class actual pieces of music written in four or five parts, and not just lesson book exercises in unison, I wrote “Clocca”, a piece with *pizzicato* throughout. The students said they really enjoyed it in the first weeks of class, so I created a suite of pieces for beginning string ensembles of an appropriate performance length that features *pizzicato* throughout. This piece introduces all first position notes, and uses rhythmic play alongs to facilitate practice and keep the students engaged, as they venture into string playing. For the basis of my composition, I created a diagram to guide my composition choices. The diagram divides all the first position notes on the string instruments by the various fingers the students use.

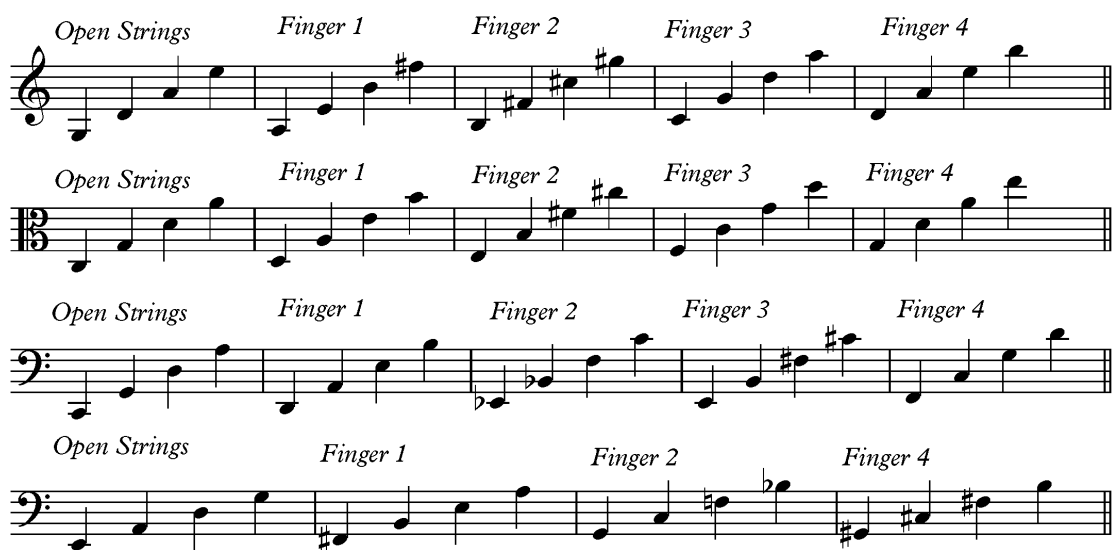


Figure 4: String instrument fingering diagram

Time After Time

Nicole Marques

$\text{♩} = 120$

Violin I *f*

Violin II *f* pizz.

Viola *f* pizz.

Violoncello *f* pizz.

Double Bass *f* pizz.

This block contains the first four measures of the musical score. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 120. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The time signature changes from 4/4 to 3/4 in measure 2 and back to 4/4 in measures 3 and 4. The instrumentation includes Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. All string parts begin with a forte (f) dynamic. Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass are marked with 'pizz.' (pizzicato) in measure 1. The Violin I part has a forte (f) dynamic in measure 1. The score shows a complex rhythmic pattern with many eighth and sixteenth notes, and some measures contain rests.

5

This block contains measures 5 through 8 of the musical score. The key signature remains two sharps. The time signature is 4/4 for all measures. The instrumentation continues with Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The musical notation continues with various rhythmic figures, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and some measures contain rests. The dynamics are not explicitly marked in this section, but the forte (f) dynamic from the previous section is implied.

9

Violin I: *pp*, arco

Violin II: *pp*, arco

Viola: *f*, arco

Cello: *mp*

Double Bass: *mp*

13

The image shows a musical score for the song "The Rose Tree". It is written for a string quartet, with five staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello I, and Violoncello II. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into three measures. The first measure is marked with a forte (f) dynamic and a pizzicato (pizz.) instruction. The second measure is marked with a mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic and a pizzicato (pizz.) instruction. The third measure is marked with a forte (f) dynamic and an arco instruction. The melody is primarily carried by the Violin I and Violoncello I parts, with the other instruments providing harmonic support.

17 pizz.

pizz.

pizz.

f

21

25

Open for Solos

pizz.

mp

pizz.

mp

pizz.

mp

mp

25

26

27

28

29

29

30

31

32

33

On Cue

Musical score for measures 33-36. The score is written for five staves: two treble staves and three bass staves. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The time signature changes from 4/4 to 3/4 at measure 34 and back to 4/4 at measure 35. The first staff begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The second staff also begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The third staff begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The fourth staff begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The fifth staff begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The score ends with a double bar line at measure 36.

37

Musical score for measures 37-40. The score is written for five staves: two treble staves and three bass staves. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The time signature changes from 4/4 to 3/4 at measure 38 and back to 4/4 at measure 39. The first staff begins with a sforzando (*sfz*) dynamic. The second staff begins with a sforzando (*sfz*) dynamic. The third staff begins with a sforzando (*sfz*) dynamic. The fourth staff begins with a sforzando (*sfz*) dynamic. The fifth staff begins with a sforzando (*sfz*) dynamic. The score ends with a double bar line at measure 40.

One of the challenges of teaching beginning strings is that the students are new to everything, including music literacy. The Central Peel Regional Strings music literacy components include music rudiments, ear training, and composition. In grade 9, the students begin the semester with a unit on Music Notation, and Time Values. By the end of September they know how to read all notes on the treble and bass staves, including up to 5 ledger lines above and below the staves. In the time values unit, the students learn about time signatures in simple time, they understand how to count time values from whole notes to sixteenth notes and dotted notes. With the Advanced Placement students in the class, it is easier to move quickly through the music theory components. However, coordination and muscle memory on the instrument do not happen as quickly. With all the theory knowledge, students at times feel frustrated at what they are physically able to play, and feel a need to apply their theory knowledge to see its relevancy in the “real world”. “Time After Time” is written for a beginning strings ensemble with the purpose of educating students on the application of the Time Values units they learn in music theory classes. The piece changes time signatures often and requires that students constantly count throughout.

There are many teachable moments available throughout this composition. The purpose of “Time After Time” is to provide the opportunity for students to work through various time signatures, to solidify their knowledge of simple time signatures, and to apply dotted notes, ties and syncopated values. Many beginning strings pieces do not use syncopation, because it is deemed to be too difficult. However, I’ve researched the music that the students in my class enjoy. The music they listen to at home and on their own time is not classical beginning strings ensemble music. They listen to pieces that have irregular meters, that are syncopated, sung, and

with a rhythm section. All of these things provide prior knowledge and familiarity. They are comfortable hearing syncopation and this piece makes use of elements that are also present in the music students listen to outside of class. The backing tracks accompaniment introduces the students to the piece orally, making the melody comfortable to them, and sing-able.

Last Night's Dance

For String Orchestra & Solo Violin

Nicole Marques
& Matthew Tishler

♩=140

Violin(Solo)

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass

mp

5

A

f

f div.

f

f

f

f

9

13 **B**

17

17

18

19

21

C

21

22

23

25

Musical score for measures 25-28. The score consists of six staves. The first three staves are in treble clef, and the last three are in bass clef. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The time signature is not explicitly shown but appears to be 4/4. The music features a variety of note values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, as well as rests. There are several dynamic markings, including 'V' (forte) and 'p' (piano). The notation includes slurs, ties, and phrasing slurs.

29

D

Musical score for measures 29-32. The score consists of six staves. The first three staves are in treble clef, and the last three are in bass clef. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The time signature is not explicitly shown but appears to be 4/4. The music features a variety of note values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, as well as rests. There are several dynamic markings, including 'V' (forte) and 'p' (piano). The notation includes slurs, ties, and phrasing slurs.

33

E

Musical score for measures 33-36, marked 'E' and 'f'. The score is written for six staves (three systems of two staves each) in E major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. The first system (measures 33-34) features a melody in the upper voice and a complex accompaniment in the lower voice. The second system (measures 35-36) continues the melody and accompaniment, with the lower voice featuring a prominent bass line. The score is marked 'f' (forte) throughout.

37

Musical score for measures 37-40. The score continues from the previous system, maintaining the same key signature and time signature. The melody in the upper voice continues, while the accompaniment in the lower voice features a strong bass line. The score is marked 'f' (forte) throughout.

41

Musical score for measures 41-44. The score is written for six staves, grouped in pairs. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The time signature is 12/8. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and accidentals. The first staff (treble clef) features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The second staff (treble clef) provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines. The third staff (treble clef) continues the melodic development. The fourth staff (bass clef) features a prominent bass line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The fifth staff (bass clef) provides harmonic support. The sixth staff (bass clef) continues the bass line. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat signs.

45

Musical score for measures 45-48. The score is written for six staves, grouped in pairs. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The time signature is 12/8. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and accidentals. The first staff (treble clef) features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The second staff (treble clef) provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines. The third staff (treble clef) continues the melodic development. The fourth staff (bass clef) features a prominent bass line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The fifth staff (bass clef) provides harmonic support. The sixth staff (bass clef) continues the bass line. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat signs.

F Solo

49 Gmaj7 F#m7 Em7 Dmaj7

Musical score for measures 49-52. The score is written for six staves (three systems of two staves each). The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The time signature is 4/4. The first staff (treble clef) contains a whole rest in measure 49, followed by a half note G#4 in measure 50, and a quarter note G#4 in measure 51. The second staff (treble clef) contains a whole rest in measure 49, followed by a half note G#4 in measure 50, and a quarter note G#4 in measure 51. The third staff (treble clef) contains a whole rest in measure 49, followed by a half note G#4 in measure 50, and a quarter note G#4 in measure 51. The fourth staff (bass clef) contains a whole rest in measure 49, followed by a half note G#4 in measure 50, and a quarter note G#4 in measure 51. The fifth staff (bass clef) contains a whole rest in measure 49, followed by a half note G#4 in measure 50, and a quarter note G#4 in measure 51. The sixth staff (bass clef) contains a whole rest in measure 49, followed by a half note G#4 in measure 50, and a quarter note G#4 in measure 51. The dynamic marking *mp* is present in measures 50 and 51. The chord changes are Gmaj7, F#m7, Em7, and Dmaj7.

53 Gmaj7 F#m7 Em7 Dmaj7

Musical score for measures 53-56. The score is written for six staves (three systems of two staves each). The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The time signature is 4/4. The first staff (treble clef) contains a whole rest in measure 53, followed by a half note G#4 in measure 54, and a quarter note G#4 in measure 55. The second staff (treble clef) contains a whole rest in measure 53, followed by a half note G#4 in measure 54, and a quarter note G#4 in measure 55. The third staff (treble clef) contains a whole rest in measure 53, followed by a half note G#4 in measure 54, and a quarter note G#4 in measure 55. The fourth staff (bass clef) contains a whole rest in measure 53, followed by a half note G#4 in measure 54, and a quarter note G#4 in measure 55. The fifth staff (bass clef) contains a whole rest in measure 53, followed by a half note G#4 in measure 54, and a quarter note G#4 in measure 55. The sixth staff (bass clef) contains a whole rest in measure 53, followed by a half note G#4 in measure 54, and a quarter note G#4 in measure 55. The dynamic marking *mp* is present in measures 54 and 55. The chord changes are Gmaj7, F#m7, Em7, and Dmaj7.

57

G

Musical score for measures 57-60. The score is written for six staves. Measures 57 and 58 are marked with a large bracket on the left. Measure 59 is marked with a large bracket on the right. Measure 60 is marked with a large bracket on the right. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The time signature is 4/4. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The dynamic markings are *sfz* (sforzando) and *ff* (fortissimo). The score is written in a grand staff format with three staves for the right hand and three staves for the left hand.

61

Musical score for measures 61-64. The score is written for six staves. Measures 61 and 62 are marked with a large bracket on the left. Measure 63 is marked with a large bracket on the right. Measure 64 is marked with a large bracket on the right. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The time signature is 4/4. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The dynamic markings are *sfz* (sforzando) and *ff* (fortissimo). The score is written in a grand staff format with three staves for the right hand and three staves for the left hand.

65

Musical score for measures 65-68. The score is written for six staves, grouped in pairs. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and accidentals. The first staff of each pair is in treble clef, and the second is in bass clef. The music features a mix of eighth, quarter, and half notes, with some measures containing rests.

69

Musical score for measures 69-72. The score is written for six staves, grouped in pairs. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and accidentals. The first staff of each pair is in treble clef, and the second is in bass clef. The music features a mix of eighth, quarter, and half notes, with some measures containing rests. A double bar line is present at the end of measure 72.

73

H

Musical score for measures 73-76. The score is written for six staves (three systems of two staves each). The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The time signature is 12/8. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The first system (measures 73-74) shows a complex melodic line in the upper staves and a more rhythmic accompaniment in the lower staves. The second system (measures 75-76) features a prominent melodic line in the upper staves, with the lower staves providing a steady accompaniment. The dynamic marking *mp* (mezzo-piano) is indicated in the second system.

77

Musical score for measures 77-78. The score is written for six staves (three systems of two staves each). The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The time signature is 12/8. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The first system (measures 77-78) shows a complex melodic line in the upper staves and a more rhythmic accompaniment in the lower staves. The second system (measures 79-80) features a prominent melodic line in the upper staves, with the lower staves providing a steady accompaniment. The dynamic marking *mp* (mezzo-piano) is indicated in the second system.

One of the challenges in the Regional Strings Intermediate Strings class is keeping students engaged while practicing, and motivating them to practice with a metronome. Many students do not enjoy and often avoid using a metronome. However, students love playing with a rhythm section. The POP Strings series in this thesis feature rhythm section accompaniment for the students to practice along with, functioning as a metronome. Some of the concerns students have expressed have been “I don’t know how my part fits in with the other parts” (grade 10 strings student). With the backing tracks in this thesis, the students have the ability to play their part, while still hearing the other string parts; they also have the option of just playing their part with only rhythm accompaniment. Giving students options is important in their high school years, it keeps them engaged, motivated, and it gives them a sense of ownership of their own learning.

Last Night’s Dance has a POP-disco feel, appeals to the music the students currently listen, and still teaches them about dynamics and articulation techniques. The goal in creating this piece was rapid alternation between *marcato*, *spiccato*, *staccato*, and *legato* bowing techniques (right-hand articulation) on all instrument parts. The articulation is constantly changing, and to play the piece as it is intended, requires a full use of the bow, with great control of bounce, weight, bow speed and bow distribution. Furthermore, the piece features a solo violin part. In my ensembles, I always have one or two players that really distinguish themselves and it is not always easy to keep them engaged when the other students in the class require more time with pieces. A solo is a great way to give them a leadership opportunity and challenge them musically. This piece features a solo section, available for any string player, the students can practice along with the guitar solo in the recording to practice the solo accompaniment, or omit

the guitar solo and practice with an accompaniment track to improvise on their instrument. The Ontario curriculum documents push for creative thinking skills, and activities with inquiry based learning. I believe improvisation is a way to achieve that in the music classroom.

The 21st century learner also needs to hear a final product, to have a model of what he/she is working up towards, they need an *exemplar*. With each piece the students also have live performance recordings to model and to show them an example of the final goal with the piece. Today's 21st century learner has a difficult time working towards the unknown, when there is so much information and answers at their fingertips. They need to hear a piece before they play it, the notes on the page aren't enough motivation. I believe that the way to engage the teenage learner into music is through the combination of sheet music with audio recording of final performance and backing tracks to motivate practice.

Quando o Sol e a Lua

"The Sun & the Moon"

Nicole Marques
& Matthew Tishler

A ♩ = 106

Violin I

Violin II *mf*

Violin III *mf*

Viola *mf*

Violoncello *mf*

Double Bass *mf*

5 **B**

mf

9

Musical score for measures 9-12. The score is in D major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. It features six staves: three treble clefs and three bass clefs. The melody is primarily in the upper staves, with the bass line providing harmonic support. Measures 9-12 show a progression of chords and melodic lines, ending with a whole note chord in measure 12.

13 **C**

Musical score for measures 13-16. The score is in C major (no sharps or flats) and 4/4 time. It features six staves: three treble clefs and three bass clefs. A box labeled 'C' is placed above the first staff of measure 13. The melody continues in the upper staves, and the bass line provides harmonic support. Measures 13-16 show a progression of chords and melodic lines, ending with a whole note chord in measure 16.

17

Musical score for measures 17-20. The score is written for six staves in D major (two sharps). Measures 17-19 feature a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the lower staves and a melody in the upper staves. In measure 20, the upper staves play a more complex, sixteenth-note melody while the lower staves continue with the eighth-note accompaniment.

21 **D**

Musical score for measures 21-24. Measure 21 is marked with a forte *f* dynamic. The score continues with the same accompaniment and melodic patterns as the previous section, maintaining the D major key signature.

25

Musical score for measures 25-28. The score is written for six staves, grouped in pairs. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The notation includes various rhythmic values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. There are dynamic markings such as *mf* and *mp*. A fermata is present over the final note of the first staff in measure 28. The bottom staff features a series of eighth notes with upward-pointing stems.

29

E

Musical score for measures 29-32. The score is written for six staves, grouped in pairs. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The notation includes various rhythmic values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. There are dynamic markings such as *mf* and *mp*. A fermata is present over the final note of the first staff in measure 32. The bottom staff features a series of eighth notes with upward-pointing stems.

33

33

37

F

37

mf

mf

mf

mf

mf

mf

41

Musical score for measures 41-44. The score is written for six staves, organized into three systems of two staves each. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The first system (measures 41-42) features a melody in the upper staves and a rhythmic accompaniment in the lower staves. The second system (measures 43-44) continues the melody and accompaniment, with a forte (ff) dynamic marking appearing in the upper staves. The third system (measures 45-46) shows the melody and accompaniment continuing, with a forte (ff) dynamic marking appearing in the lower staves.

45

G

Musical score for measures 45-48. The score is written for six staves, organized into three systems of two staves each. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The first system (measures 45-46) features a melody in the upper staves and a rhythmic accompaniment in the lower staves. The second system (measures 47-48) continues the melody and accompaniment, with a forte (f) dynamic marking appearing in the upper staves. The third system (measures 49-50) shows the melody and accompaniment continuing, with a forte (f) dynamic marking appearing in the lower staves.

49

50

53

H

54

55

56

mf

mf

mp

mp

mp

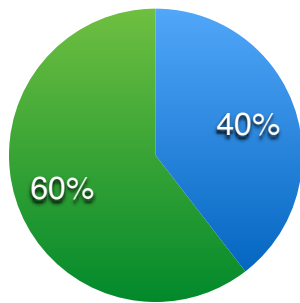
mp



“Quando o Sol e a Lua” is Portuguese for “When the Sun and the Moon”. The piece is at a slower tempo and features legato bowing, syncopated bowing (changes of bow not on typical beats). This piece also features a strong melody for students to apply their vibrato technique. Vibrato is something intermediate players are always excited to learn and explore. The focus of this piece is to provide the opportunity for students to explore the music through the use of vibrato and bow control. All players are required to use long bows, keeping in mind appropriate bowing lanes, bow weight, bow speed, and bow distribution. This piece offers educators the opportunity to explore and apply all these bowing terms with their students, while still keeping them engaged. Backing tracks offer a great opportunity for students to practice with a steady tempo. Motivating students to practice with a metronome has always been a challenge. The students were asked about their practice routine at home and of metronome practice. They were

asked two questions: question 1, “Which option are you likely to practice longer for? Practicing alone with a metronome or with a rhythm play along?”

● Metronome ● Play-Along

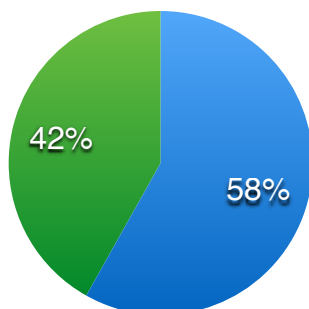


Analysis: 60% of students prefer practicing with a Play-Along at home instead of a metronome.

Figure 5: Metronome vs. Play along individual practice

Sixty percent of the students said they would practice longer if they practiced with a rhythm play-along. Only 40% of the students said they would practice longer with a metronome. When the students were asked about group practicing for the second question, their answers changed. When practicing with a group do you prefer to practice with a metronome or with a rhythm play along?

● Metronome ● Play-Along



Analysis: For group practice, the students change noticeably, maybe due to the social aspect which comes with group practice. In a group students feel less need for a Play-Along.

Figure 6: Metronome vs. Play along group practice

Forty-two percent of the students prefer to practice in a group with play-along accompaniments, as opposed to metronomes, and fifty-eight percent of students prefer to practice in a group with a metronome. The students justified the different result in terms of having other instruments in the room and not needing that social aspect anymore. Social engagement and relationships in adolescence are described by the psychology method, “Lifespan Development” by Denise Boyd, Paul Johnson and Helen Bee. They stated:

Adolescent Social Relationships:

- Adolescent-parent interactions typically become somewhat more conflicted in early adolescence.
- Strong attachments to parents remain so and are predictive of good peer relations. Authoritative parenting continues to be the optimal style to use with adolescents.
- Susceptibility to peer-group pressure appears to be at its peak at about age 13 or 14. Reputation-based groups, or crowds, as well as smaller groups, called cliques, are important parts of adolescent social relationships.
- Heterosexual teens gradually move from same-sex peer groups to heterosexual couples. The feeling of being “in love” is important to the formation of couple relationships. Many homosexual teens experiment with heterosexual and homosexual relationships before committing to a gay, lesbian, or bisexual orientation in mid-adolescence. ⁶

⁶ Bee, Helen L., and Denise Roberts. Boyd. *Lifespan Development*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2002, 364

For Always

Nicole Marques
& Matthew Tishler

Swing ♩ = 85

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass

mf

mp

mp

4

7

mp

p

p

p

p

10

mf

mf

mf

13

f

f

16

Musical score for measures 16-18. The score is written for five staves: two treble clefs, two bass clefs, and a double bass clef. The key signature is one sharp (F#). Measure 16 starts with a whole rest in the first treble staff and a half note in the second treble staff. Measure 17 features a *mf* dynamic marking above the first treble staff and a *mp* dynamic marking above the second treble staff. Measure 18 continues the melodic and harmonic development.

19

Musical score for measures 19-21. The score continues with five staves. Measure 19 shows a melodic line in the first treble staff with a *V* marking. Measure 20 features a *V* marking above the first treble staff. Measure 21 continues the melodic and harmonic development.

22

Musical score for measures 22-24. The score continues with five staves. Measure 22 features a *V* marking above the first treble staff. Measure 23 continues the melodic and harmonic development. Measure 24 continues the melodic and harmonic development.

25

28

31

34

37

40

43

Musical score for measures 43-45. The score is for a piano with five staves: Treble 1, Treble 2, Bass 1, Bass 2, and Bass 3. The key signature has one sharp (F#). Measures 43-45 show a melodic line in Treble 1 and Bass 1, with sustained notes in Treble 2, Bass 2, and Bass 3. A horizontal line is drawn across measures 44 and 45 in Treble 1 and Bass 1.

46

Musical score for measures 46-47. The score is for a piano with five staves: Treble 1, Treble 2, Bass 1, Bass 2, and Bass 3. The key signature has one sharp (F#). Measures 46-47 show a melodic line in Treble 1 and Bass 1, with sustained notes in Treble 2, Bass 2, and Bass 3. A horizontal line is drawn across measures 46 and 47 in Treble 1 and Bass 1. The dynamic marking *pp* is present on the first staff of each measure.

The advanced player is a challenge to engage in a string class. The advanced class features players with various instrument levels and interests. These students enjoy playing classical repertoire, since advanced classical repertoire offers challenges for all string instruments. However, students do not listen to classical music at home, and in order to appeal to their prior knowledge, to make learning relevant for their world, repertoire choices need to reflect the needs, likes and wishes of the learners. Just like the beginner and intermediate players, advanced players share the same likes in music genres and styles listened to at home. R&B was a popular style among the students, and “For Always” is a classical R&B rhythm piece, with a swung feel. “For Always” was arranged for string ensembles, as an advanced level piece, due to its higher notes and shifting in the upper strings. The cellos have challenging rhythmic patterns that are the rhythmic driving force of the piece.

“For Always” further explores various forms of right-hand articulation, such as *legato* (smoothly connected), *staccato* (short and detached) and *spiccato* (short, off the string) bow strokes. It develops right hand control with rapid alternations between the various bowing styles.

Temporal Senses

Nicole Marques

$\text{♩} = 150$

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

6

f

10

14

A Drums / Percussion Fill

18

B Solo Section - Repeat X3

22

26

Repeat until cue

Musical score for measures 26-29. The score consists of four staves. The first two staves are in treble clef, and the last two are in bass clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 4/4. The music features a repeating pattern of eighth and quarter notes, with rests. A repeat sign is at the end of measure 29.

30

C On Cue

Musical score for measures 30-33. The score consists of four staves. The first two staves are in treble clef, and the last two are in bass clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 4/4. The music features a repeating pattern of eighth and quarter notes, with rests. The dynamic marking *f* (forte) is present at the beginning of measure 30 and at the start of the first and third staves in measure 30.

34

D

Musical score for measures 34-37. The score consists of four staves. The first two staves are in treble clef, and the last two are in bass clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 4/4. The music features a repeating pattern of eighth and quarter notes, with rests. The dynamic marking *f* (forte) is present at the beginning of measure 34 and at the start of the first, third, and fourth staves in measure 34. The dynamic marking *mp* (mezzo-piano) is present at the beginning of measure 35 and at the start of the second staff in measure 35.

38

Musical score for measures 38-41. The score is written for four staves (Treble, Treble, Alto, Bass) in a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The time signature changes from 5/4 to 4/4 and back to 5/4. The music features complex rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests.

42

Musical score for measures 42-45. The score continues with the same four-staff arrangement and key signature. The time signature changes from 5/4 to 4/4 and back to 5/4. The music features complex rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests.

46

Musical score for measures 46-49. The score continues with the same four-staff arrangement and key signature. The time signature changes from 5/4 to 4/4 and back to 5/4. The music features complex rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests.

“Temporal Senses” is more of a pop/contemporary-classical piece, written for an advanced ensemble. This composition features various time signature changes and the composition was approached from a polyphonic perspective. The piece is at a level five to six, because of its difficult rhythms and time signatures. The students work through the creative process with a rhythm section accompaniment (CD track). This facilitates the learning of the piece. This piece includes an improvisation section, which any of the students can explore with their instruments. It is important for string players to begin improvising at an early age and to be provided with that opportunity regularly. Western classical music does not provide young players with opportunities to share their voice, thoughts, or to demonstrate, through improvisation, their music literacy.

Grade 10 students learn about hybrid meters in the music literacy course content; this piece features alternations of various time signatures, from simple time to compound time and hybrid meters for them to apply that knowledge. Counting is challenging, but the rhythmic accompaniment with an audio play-along provides students with practice support and modeling throughout to ensure correct counting. “Temporal Senses” also provides students with some exposure to a pop/world-music style on their string instruments. African percussion accompaniment is used throughout the piece, and an accordion (not usually used in pop music) is also accompanying the string ensemble, further exposing students to more instruments outside of the western classical orchestra instrumentation.

CHAPTER THREE: IN CONCLUSION

As an Ontario secondary school educator, my goal is to “Reach every student” (Ontario Curriculum Documents), I am confident that this project approaches that goal. Sixty years ago the Peel District School Board had various string programs. Due to budget cuts, they were cancelled and the instruments were sold to other boards. Currently, including Central Peel Regional Strings, there are only two secondary school string programs in the Peel District School Board. These programs have lost popularity and demand due to lack of interest. It is possible to gain back student interest by motivating the learners and appealing to their learning needs.

Students are currently listening to popular music genres—only five percent of the students in the strings program listen to Western Classical music outside of class time. If in Geography and Science classes students are being taught real-life skills of what is happening in the world at the moment, why should they not be taught the same thing in a music classroom? This thesis is not about undermining the power of classical training and the beauty of listening to classical music. The students at Central Peel Secondary School also play classical western music; they are currently playing the first and second movements of Brandenburg Concerto No.3 by J.S. Bach. There needs to be a balance in the repertoire, however, in order to keep students engaged. They are enjoying the Brandenburg concerto because they like the challenge, but it is balanced with other engaging modern strings repertoire, and this creates their enjoyment.

With this project I am confident that string programs can be saved in Ontario Schools, and instrumental music can continue to be a strong part of the elementary and secondary Ontario school curricula.

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APPENDIX A: HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC PROGRAM RESEARCH REGIONAL STRINGS CLASSROOMS

Purpose

My goal for this research was to improve my understanding of the consumers for the music that I compose. My goal was to understand what adolescents like, don't like and why. I worked with a pedagogical psychology method, "Lifespan Development" by Denise Boyd, Paul Johnson and Helen Bee. This book outlines the two main points that informed my research:

- Physical and Cognitive Development in Adolescence
- Social and Personality Development in Adolescence

In Adolescence, a summary of the main physical and cognitive development changes are:

Schooling:

- When comparing top performing 15-year-old Canadians, females surpass males in literacy, males outperform females in math, and both genders are roughly equivalent in science.
- Those who success academically in secondary school are typically from authoritative families. Those who drop out are less likely to find value in school life.
- Teens working more than 10 to 15 hours per week experience more chronic stress and risk of getting lower grades or engaging in more risky behaviour than those who work less. Work can be beneficial for students who have positive work experiences.

Changes in thinking and memory:

- For Piaget, the formal operational stage is characterized by the ability to apply basic cognitive operations to ideas and possibilities, in addition to actual objects.
- Although some adolescents exhibit advanced forms of thinking, formal operational thinking is not universal, nor is it consistently used by those who are able to do it
- Memory function improves in adolescence as teens become more proficient in metacognition, metamemory, and strategy use.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Problems:

- Teens engage in high rates of various kinds of risky behaviour, including unprotected sex, drug use, and fast driving
The use of alcohol and marijuana remains high among Canadian teenagers. Those most likely to use or abuse drugs are those who also show other forms of deviant or problem behaviour, including poor school achievement
- Eating disorders, such as bulimia and anorexia, are more common among teenaged girls than teenaged boys.
- Depression and suicide are other mental health problems that are common during adolescence.⁷

⁷ Bee, Helen L., and Denise Roberts. Boyd. *Lifespan Development*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2002, 334

In Adolescence, a summary of the main physical and cognitive development changes are:

Self-Concept and Personality:

- Self-definitions become increasingly abstract at adolescence, with more emphasis on enduring internal qualities and ideology.
- Teenagers also increasingly define themselves in terms that include gender-related traits. When both masculinity and femininity are present, the individual is described as androgynous.
- Self-esteem drops somewhat at the beginning of adolescence and then rises steadily throughout the teenaged years.
- Young people in clearly identifiable minority groups have the additional task in adolescence of forming an ethnic identity.
- Teens who are pessimistic and blame their problems on forces outside themselves encounter more difficulties than peers who have a more positive outlook.

Moral Development:

- The acquisition of cognitive role-taking skills and the social environment are both important to moral development. To foster moral reasoning, adults must provide children with opportunities for discussion of moral issues.
- Other theorists say moral reasoning is based on learning moral behaviour and on emotional factors.
- Youth who commit criminal offences are usually found to be far behind their peers in both role taking and moral reasoning. Other factors, such as parenting style, may be equally important in criminality.

Social Relationships:

- Adolescent-parent interactions typically become somewhat more conflicted in early adolescence.
- Strong attachments to parents remain so and are predictive of good peer relations. Authoritative parenting continues to be the optimal style to use with adolescents.
- Susceptibility to peer-group pressure appears to be at its peak at about age 13 or 14. Reputation-based groups, or crowds, as well as smaller groups, called cliques, are important parts of adolescent social relationships.
- Heterosexual teens gradually move from same-sex peer groups to heterosexual couples. The feeling of being “in love” is important to the formation of couple relationships. Many homosexual teens experiment with heterosexual and homosexual relationships before committing to a gay, lesbian, or bisexual orientation in mid-adolescence.⁸

Not all of the characteristics directly apply to music, but they apply to student’s development and well-being. As a composer/educator it is important to understand what the consumer wants to play, and while creating suitable activities for small chamber groups, to understand group dynamics and the importance of social development in adolescent years. As I read through the research gathered in “Lifespan Development” I wanted to know more about what my students liked/disliked specifically applied the high school strings classroom. I created a google-form questionnaire, based on my research from the points mentioned above. The students

⁸ Bee, Helen L., and Denise Roberts. Boyd. *Lifespan Development*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2002, 364

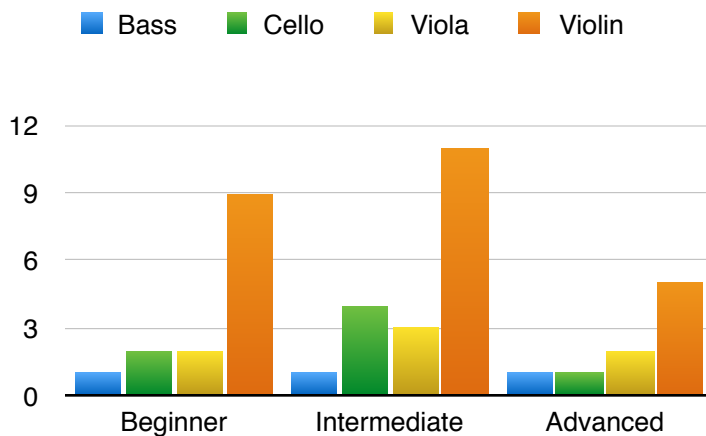
anonymously participated and answered all the questions. 43 students in grades 9 and 10 participated in the questionnaire, from 3 different strings classes: Beginning Strings, Intermediate Strings, and Advanced Strings. I have logged their answers and compared them with charts, to support my thesis research and inform my musical decisions as a composer.

Questionnaire Responses

Part 1: Student Background Information

Description: The questionnaire was anonymous, however, It was important for me to have some background information in order to compare student's answers to their age, instrument and playing level to better understand their responses.

Question 1: What string instrument do you play?

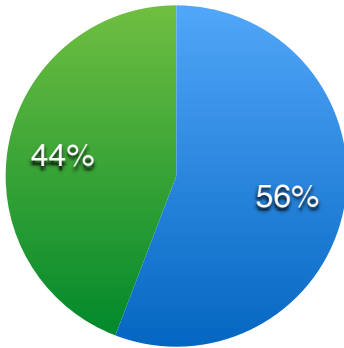


Analysis: The majority of students play violin, then cello, viola, and double bass.

As a composer it's important to know that information for arrangement purposes, having 2 violin parts or even 3 is extremely important.

Question 2: Does anyone else in your household play a musical instrument?

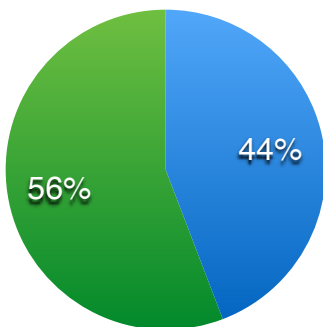
● Yes ● No



Analysis: The majority of students have a person in their household that plays a musical instrument.

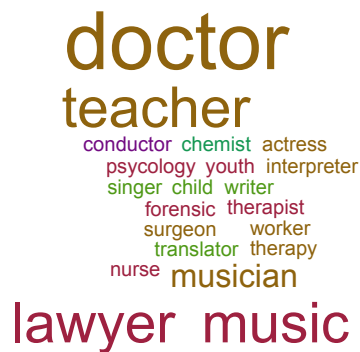
Question 3: Are you interested in pursuing a professional music career?

● Yes ● No



Analysis: Many of the students are interested in pursuing a career in music, however many are also not. As an educator, I must appeal to both groups of students, I must provide material that engages them, but also make sure that the repertoire we work on is preparing the students for post-secondary education in music.

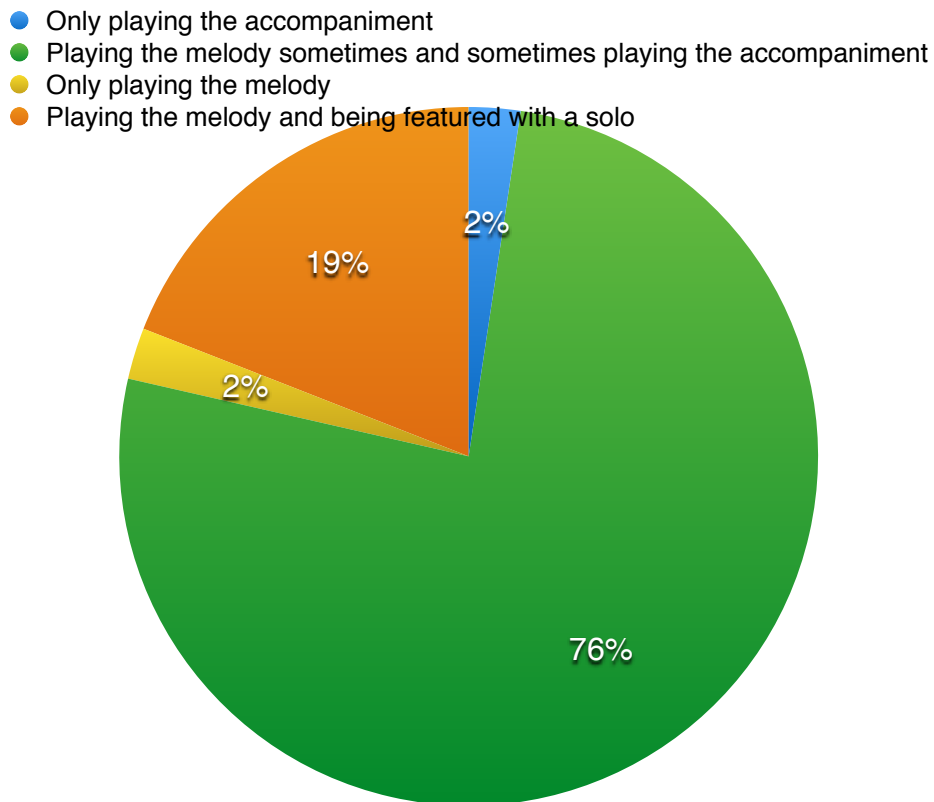
Question 4: Specify which music or non-music career(s) you'd like to pursue.



Analysis: As seen on the word cloud, the main career choices for the students were: doctor, teacher, lawyer and musician.

Question 5: Which of the following arrangement options do you prefer to play?

- a) Playing the melody and being featured with a solo
- b) Only playing the melody
- c) Only playing the accompaniment
- d) Playing the melody sometimes and sometimes playing the accompaniment



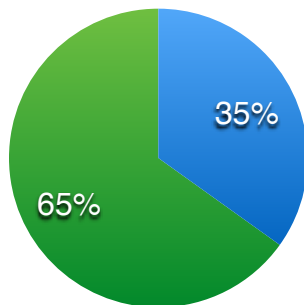
Analysis: 76% of students want to play both the melody and the accompaniment. This means that compositions must feature the melody and accompaniment at various moments throughout all instrument sections to satisfy the learner's needs.

Part 2: Practice Routines

Description: As a composer, I want to write pieces that engage the players, and motivate them to play string instruments, by appealing to their learning needs. For this section of questions, I asked students about repertoire and how that would influence their practice. I also added a question about group practice, I wanted to understand if the majority of students would/or would not require rhythm play alongs considering they had other players to socialize and interact with.

Question 5: For individual practice, do you prefer practicing alone with a metronome or practicing with a rhythm play along?

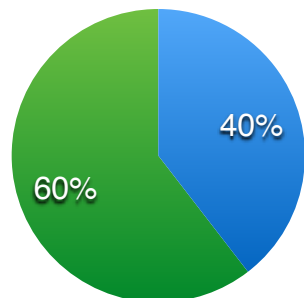
● Metronome ● Play-Along



Analysis: 65% of students prefer practicing with a Play-Along at home than a metronome.

Question 6: Which are you likely to practice longer for? Practicing alone with a metronome or with a rhythm play along?

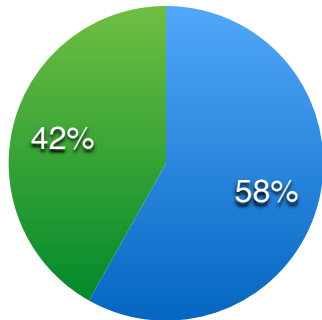
● Metronome ● Play-Along



Analysis: 60% of students will practice longer with a play-along than with a metronome.

Question 7: For group practice, do you prefer practicing with a metronome or with a rhythm play along?

● Metronome ● Play-Along



Analysis: For group practice, the students change dramatically, maybe due to the social aspect which comes with group practice. In a group students don't feel such a higher need for play-alongs.

Part 3: Repertoire Preferences

Description: I've always let my students share their opinions with relation to repertoire choices, and gave them options to choose from. With that, I've noticed that the majority of students tended to choose Pop up-beat pieces. However, I've never had any concrete data to use as proof, I was very curious to see what my students would answer.

Musical Period	Number of Students
Baroque Period	4
Classical Period	7
Romantic Period	4
Pop Orchestra Repertoire	28

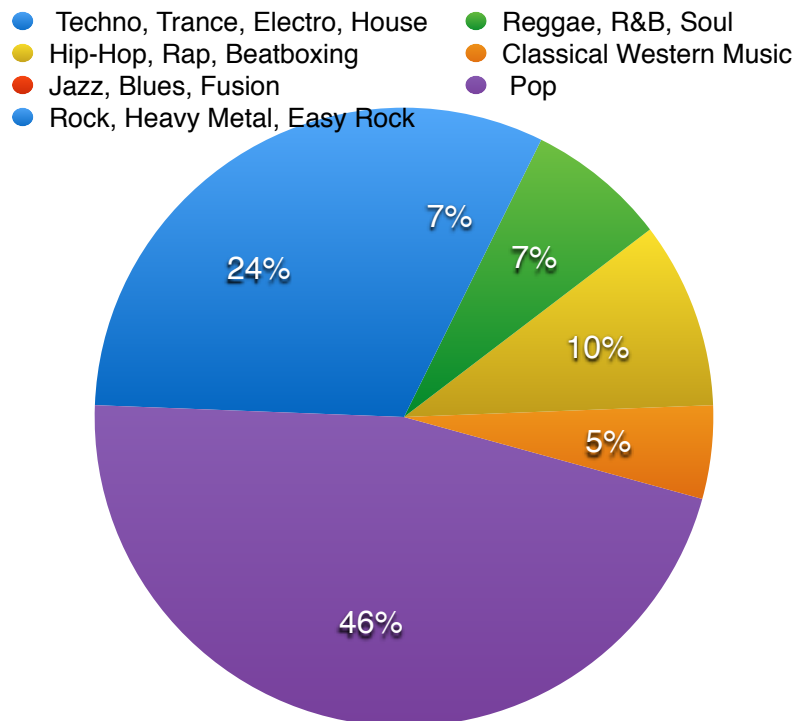
Question 9: Why would you choose that style of piece? (continuation of previous question)



80

Question 10: What style of music do you listen to more often?

- a) Rock, Heavy Metal, Easy Rock
- b) Pop
- c) Jazz, Blues, Fusion
- d) Classical Western Music (Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic Periods)
- e) Hip-Hop, Rap, Beatboxing
- f) Reggae, R&B, Soul
- g) Techno, Trance, Electro, House

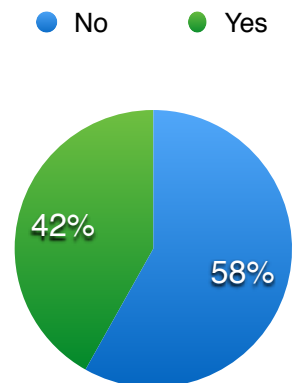


Analysis: 46% of students listen to Pop music, 24% listen to Rock, heavy metal & easy rock, and only 5% listen to classical music at home. Therefore, Classical music is not what these adolescent learners are typically interested in listening to.

Part 4: Musical Expression - Improvisation

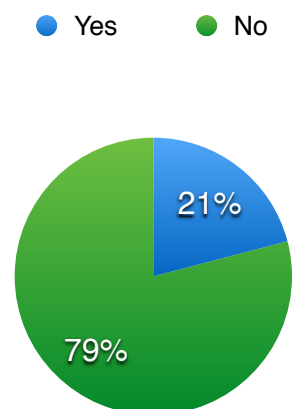
Description: Improvisation and composition is a big part of the Ontario secondary school curriculum, it is expected that educators are incorporating this into their daily lessons. However, with the research that I had done in relation to adolescents' social development, I added these questions to understand how my students felt about improvisation, so that I could create activities that could help them feel more comfortable with self-expression.

Question 11: Do you enjoy improvising on your string instrument?



Analysis: 58% of students do not feel comfortable improvising in front of their classmates. There is a need for educators to create activities that enable students to explore improvisation in a comfortable setting.

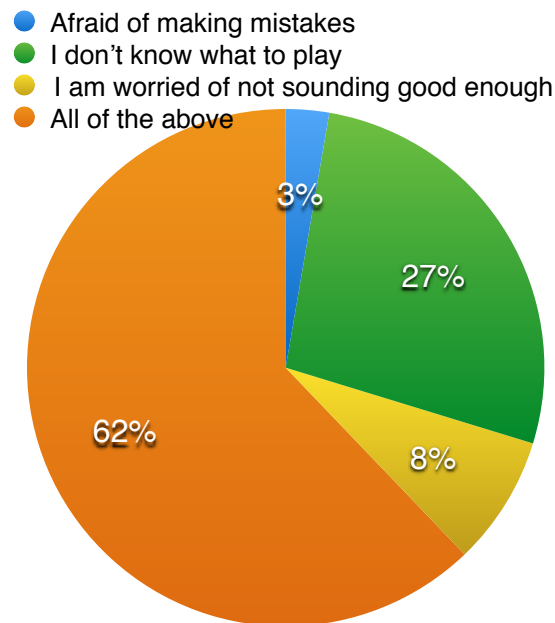
Question 12: Are you comfortable improvising in front of your classmates?



Analysis: 79% of students do not feel comfortable improvising in front of their classmates. This means students need “mistake-proof” activities so that improvisation can become something they do not fear.

Question 13: If not, Why? (continuation of previous question)

- a) I'm afraid of making mistakes
- b) I don't know what to play
- c) I am worried of not sounding good enough
- d) All of the above



Analysis: Most students are concerned with making mistakes, not sounding good enough and not knowing what to play.

Part 5: Oral Musical Preferences

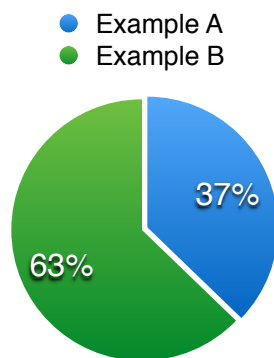
Description: For this section, I asked students to listen to two examples for each question, and choose which one they'd rather practice at home. The students did not have any information on the pieces they heard, and could not see the names of the pieces. 30 second of both pieces was played and then the students were asked to answer the question, this order was repeated 4 times

with different audio examples. For each question, I chose one Western Classical piece from (each question for a different time period) and another contemporary pop, rock, disco, hip-hop with rhythmic accompaniment. For one of the questions I used Beethoven's 5th Symphony in C minor played as it was written, and then played with a rock & roll string ensemble to understand what the students would prefer.

Question 14: Which of the following excerpts would you rather practice at home?

Example A: Vivaldi's Violin Concerto in A minor (Baroque Period)

Example B: Outside the Box by Miri Ben-Ari (Hip-Hop Violin)

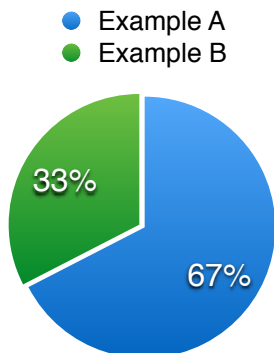


Analysis: 63% of students prefer to practice Miri Ben-Ari's Hip-hop violin over Vivaldi's violin concerto.

Question 15: Which of the following excerpts would you rather practice at home?

Example A: Nicole Marques "Midnight Storm" (Pop)

Example B: Haydn String Quartet in E flat Major (Classical)

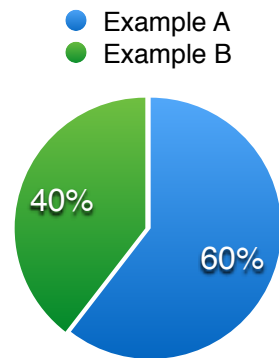


Analysis: 67% of students chose one of my compositions "Midnight Storm".

Question 16: Which of the following excerpts would you rather practice at home?

Example A: David Garrett “the 5th” (Rock)

Example B: Beethoven’s Symphony No.5 in C minor (Classical)

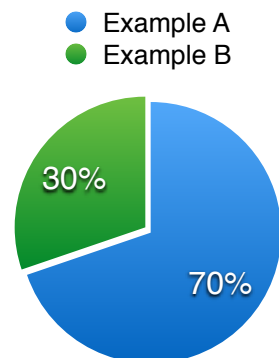


Analysis: 60% of students prefer to practice David Garrett’s version of Beethoven’s Symphony No. 5 over the original composition.

Question 17: Which of the following excerpts would you rather practice at home?

Example A: Nicole Marques “Xama” (Pop)

Example B: Wagner’s Lohengrin Intro to 3rd Act



Analysis: 70% of students would prefer to practice one of my original Pop compositions “Xama”.

Conclusion

Throughout this research, I learned so much about my students. I learned valuable information as a composer and educator. The information about my student's likes and dislikes is essential for me to use in my own compositions to appeal to their learning needs. I learned about improvisation and the fears they feel; they need to be exposed to compositions where improvising isn't a scary thing. With my research I do not wish to undermine older classical repertoire, but I do feel that there should be more contemporary repertoire written to specifically appeal to our learner's and society's needs; with rhythmic accompaniment and energy, closer to the music they hear at home. That's the music they are familiar with, and that's what composers should be using. My goal with this is to create pieces that will engage adolescents into the world of string-playing.